AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-27. (Canceled)

28.   (New) A method to simplify access and manipulation of a set of elements in a collection, wherein the collection includes a format definition, the method comprising:

creating an iterator;

pointing the iterator to the collection;

the iterator automatically:

determining the format of the collection from the format definition;

creating a reader object that can process collections of the determined format;

associating the reader object with the collection;

extracting the set of elements from the collection using the reader object;

instantiating a set of objects representing the set of elements, wherein the set of objects can be iterated through and operated on by the iterator; and

in response to a request to process an element in the set of elements, iterating through the set of objects and performing the requested process on an object representing the element.

29.   (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the collection is a member of the group selected from a file, a database and a webpage.

30.   (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the collection is a webpage and at least one element of the set of elements is a hyperlink.

31.   (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the collection is a database and at least one element of the set of elements is a data table.

32.   (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the collection is a data table and at least one element of the set of elements is a member of the group selected from a data field, a data row and a data column.

33.   (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the requested process is a member of the group selected from add, delete, update, modify and retrieve.

34.   (New) A method to simplify access and manipulation of a set of elements in a collection, wherein the collection includes a format definition, the method comprising:

    creating an iterator;

    pointing the iterator to the collection;

    the iterator automatically:

        determining the format of the collection from the format definition;

        creating a reader object that can process collections of the determined format;

        associating the reader object with the collection;

        extracting the set of elements from the collection using the reader object;

        in response to a request to process an element in the set of elements:

            finding the element in the set of elements;

            instantiating an object representing the element; and

            performing the requested process on the object.

35.   (New) The method of claim 34, further comprising:

    uninstantiating the element by deleting the object after the requested process has been performed.

36.   (New) A system adapted to simplify access and manipulation of a set of elements in a collection, wherein the collection includes a format definition, the system comprising:

    a processor; and

    a storage;

    wherein the processor is adapted to simplify access and manipulation of the set of elements in the collection by:

        creating an iterator;

        pointing the iterator to the collection;

        the iterator automatically:

            determining the format of the collection from the format definition;

            creating a reader object that can process collections of the determined format;

            associating the reader object with the collection;

extracting the set of elements from the collection using the reader object;

instantiating a set of objects representing the set of elements, wherein the set of objects can be iterated through and operated on by the iterator; and

storing the set of objects on the storage for subsequence use.

37.   (New) The system of claim 36, the iterator further automatically:

in response to a request to process an element in the set of elements, iterating through the stored set of objects and performing the requested process on an object representing the element.

38.   (New) A system adapted to simplify access and manipulation of a set of elements in a collection, wherein the collection includes a format definition, the system comprising:

a processor; and

a storage;

wherein the processor is adapted to simplify access and manipulation of the set of elements in the collection by:

creating an iterator;

pointing the iterator to the collection;

the iterator automatically:

determining the format of the collection from the format definition;

creating a reader object that can process collections of the determined format;

associating the reader object with the collection;

extracting the set of elements from the collection using the reader object;

in response to a request to process an element in the set of elements:

finding the element in the set of elements;

instantiating an object representing the element;

storing the object on the storage for subsequence use; and

performing the requested process on the stored object.

39.   (New) A computer readable medium having program instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause a computer system to:

create an iterator;

point the iterator to the collection;

the iterator to automatically:

    determine the format of the collection from the format definition;

    create a reader object that can process collections of the determined format;

    associate the reader object with the collection;

    extract the set of elements from the collection using the reader object;

    instantiate a set of objects representing the set of elements, wherein the set of objects can be iterated through and operated on by the iterator; and

    in response to a request to process an element in the set of elements, iterate through the set of objects and perform the requested process on an object representing the element.

40.   (New) A computer readable medium having program instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause a computer system to:

create an iterator;

point the iterator to the collection;

the iterator to automatically:

    determine the format of the collection from the format definition;

    create a reader object that can process collections of the determined format;

    associate the reader object with the collection;

    extract the set of elements from the collection using the reader object;

    in response to a request to process an element in the set of elements:

        find the element in the set of elements;

        instantiate an object representing the element; and

        perform the requested process on the object.